

Virginia Department of Social Services

Independent Living Trust Fund

Background

In 1994, the Virginia Department of Social Services established such a fund which is designated for use by *Virginia's former foster care youth* progressing in post secondary education or vocational training. Virginia's Independent Living Trust Funds are intended for youth who have not completed their education by age 21 and not participating in the Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program. **Trust funds will not cover expenses while a youth is in foster care; independent living funds are available to assist in covering these expenses.**

Trust funds are not to be used for maintenance expenses such as room or board. They may be used to cover the cost of tuition, lab fees, books and supplies, etc.

Payments will be made directly to the educational institution or program. Any unused funds will revert to the Virginia Department of Social Services, Independent Living Program Trust Fund.

Local departments of social services will be the primary source of referrals to the trust fund. The agency must make a recommendation as to the youth's need for financial assistance and potential for successful completion of school.

Eligibility Guidelines

In order to be eligible for proceeds from the trust fund, a youth must:

- Have been in foster care with the state of Virginia at age 16 and must have had their most recent foster care provided by the state of Virginia. Adopted youth may be eligible if the adoption has disrupted and they have re-entered foster care.
- Have initiated their post secondary education or training by age 21.
- Have financial need. Eligibility for trust fund payments is based on need and the youth must demonstrate such need. This may be done by providing a financial statement and a statement of all other available income, earned and unearned.
- Apply for financial aid through the school or training program they wish to attend or participate in. A copy of their financial aid application and award information must be provided.
- Be enrolled as a student working toward a degree or certificate in an accredited program.
- Make satisfactory academic progress by maintaining a "C" average or having an academic standing consistent with the institution's graduation requirements. A copy of grades must be furnished to the state Independent Living Program Supervisor as soon as received in order for each term disbursement to be made within an academic year.
- Have the recommendation of the local Department of Social Services (DSS) with which they were most recently associated. If the student is unable to obtain the DSS recommendation, they must have one from the school in which they were most recently enrolled. The recommendation must address the youth's need for financial assistance and potential for successful completion of school.

Criteria

- Awards will be based on need and availability of funds.
- Funds will be awarded as requests are received.
- If funding has to be prioritized, due to demand, funds will be awarded as follows:
 - 1) To those 21 and over,
 - 2) To those nearing completion of their schooling,
 - 3) To those demonstrating the most financial need.

Application Process

- The applicant should apply for funds for the entire academic year; equal disbursements will be made for each term (e.g. semester, quarter, trimester, etc.)
- Submit a completed application with a recommendation from the local Department of Social Services **at least sixty (60) days** before the funds are needed to the:

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Independent Living Program
7 North Eighth Street, Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 726-7579

Virginia Department of Social Services Independent Living Trust Fund Application

Application

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ SSN: _____ Phone: () _____

Address: _____

Permanent address if different from above: _____

Local agency most recently associated with: _____

Name of school attending: _____

Address of school attending: _____

Period for which you are applying: _____ Grade Level: _____

GPA (Attach most recent transcript) _____ Major: _____

Other expected income/resources, including grants, scholarships, loans, earnings, other financial support.
(Attach award notices, pay stubs or other proof of income):

<u>Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Expected Expenses (Attach documentation from school of expected expenses, including room and board and other living expenses):

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Amount</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Amount Requested from Trust Fund: _____

Assurances

- I will not use these funds for room or board.
- I will furnish my grades to the state Independent Living Program after each term the period of financial aid covers.
- I will notify the Independent Living Program when I graduate.
- Any unused trust funds will be returned to the Virginia Department of Social Services, Independent Living Program Trust Fund.
- All of the information provided in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____ Date: _____